

# UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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ALL THINGS BELONGING TO THE EARTH will never change - the leaf, the blade, the flower, the wind that cries and sleeps and wakes again, the trees whose stiff arms clash and tremble in the dark - these things will always be the same, for they come up from the earth that never changes.

- Thomas Wolfe.

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## AUGUST OF '73.

The best reason, or desperate need, for a vacation is a change of scenery, discarding our daily habits, routine, rations, language and seeing a new set of faces and bodies, many of which constantly remind you of those left behind. All the senses are refreshed by new experiences whether by sight, sound, smell, taste or feel. Most refreshing for me is not being able to understand all the human chatter that goes on around one. The sound of a strange language is more muted than the hard pressing demanding irritating language we hear daily at home. The chatter of the folks in the British Isles can be almost as strange to the ear as French or Portugese. That is, accept for the delightful scotch accents of our two Scotch guides we had through the English countryside and in Edinburgh.

Traveling by air, or whatever means you happen to choose can be disconcerting, difficult and exasperating. By air, on the ground hotter than Hades; in the air, freezing cold. Planes are so dependent on the elements that often you do not get off the ground to cool off in the air. Buses in Europe actually are most comfortable and one can see and enjoy more. We had our share of fog, traveling behind schedule and missing connections, it is all part of any trip.

The flight to London was uneventful, deplaning without too much trouble to find ourselves in the airport in the worst tangle of humanity one could imagine. There must have been millions. And in this mess we ran into Christine and Richard Ellis

who had been on the same plane (not surprising on a 747). This mass of humanity left only a narrow aisle for us to pass through with our arms full of bags, they obviously were not there to greet us. We later heard that the Queen was arriving from her Canadian trip. We were glad to get out of the airport before that crowd broke. Upon arrival in London it was drizzling and the drizzle soon turned into a tropical type storm that lasted for our entire stay.

Our first day we were confined entirely to the Hotel because of the downpour. On the second we ventured underground to St. Paul's Cathedral. The Christopher Wren church is a majestic sight, always in a state of repair. It was miraculously saved from fire damage in the great bombing raids over London in 1940. Wren was a genius in choosing the ablest artists and craftsmen of his day and the interior of the Cathedral is a place of exquisite beauty. The exterior is gradually being buried by ordinary modern structures (some built by the church itself) around it so that you cannot see it until you are almost on top of it. From here we got even braver and boarded a double deck bus for Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery. Enjoyed seeing their wonderful collection of Valesquez again and their excellent modern collection of Monet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Villiard, Cezanne, Pissarro and El Greco. They also have some special early Italians represented by Lippi, Botticelli, Ucello, two Leonardo De Vincis and a single Michaelangelo. After considerable tramping around we had cocktails with Alan and Paula Baker. Paula is very busy as a catalogue designer for a modern furniture concern called "Habitat". She looks great and Alan has lost 40 pounds so we hardly knew him. Our visit with them was cut short because we had tickets to see Angela Lansbury in "Gypsy". The show is old hat and I had detested it when I saw it in New York with Merman. But Lansbury is a very great actress and it is a vital

new experience with her. Hers is a personal triumph and one can easily understand Katherine Hepburn losing her cool when she saw Lansbury's performance.

Still torrents of rain on our third day until about ten o'clock when we took off for the British Museum to see the Elgin Marbles again. They are so beautiful so well mounted that one can sit for hours admiring them. The beautiful flowing drapes over the female bodies displays incredible movement; and the virile River God, headless, armless, and with legs only to the knee has a torso with such life that it almost seems to breath. These Marbles alone make the entire trip worthwhile. Moving on into Egyptian and Syrian collections, equally interesting but so vast that one's feet give out. A quick look at the Mummies which seem to interest most people more we took off for the Victoria and Albert Museum, a favorite stop on our last visit to London. On the way Stone had to visit Harolds famous department store, a truly impressive and handsome place but it finished my legs for the day. At 5 o'clock we met Mary Clarke of the London Dancing Times for dinner and had a great chat hashing over the dance world and life in general. Mary is an interesting talker, full of amusing stories of the ballet world and her criticism is both wise and sensible. When with her we easily pick up the thread of former visits and enjoy a pleasant rapport of ideas and tastes. Hours later as we walked her to a cab our Hotel was surrounded by London's Noble Fire Brigade. Nothing serious, just a fire in the local pub.

Leaving London under clear skies and bright sunshine at 8:45 A.M. we saw much of the city we had not seen before, charming row houses with clusters of chimneys and lovely square gardens in front of each unit crowded with roses and hydrangeas. At Windsor, a delightful city, we saw the changing of the guards, a colorful spectacle past the Wren Meeting House. The English countryside was soft and lush with gentle rolling hills along the Thames, as we passed villages with thatched roofs and rich gardens growing food and flowers. Again the roadside was lined with masses of magenta fireweed, a flower well known in the west where it crops up quickly after a forest fire. The real name is Great Willow Herb or *Epibolium Augustifolium* - so there. At Oxford we stopped for a tour of the Univer-

sity which was picturesque but on the dull side. Our next village was Chipping Camden where we were held up by a local auction in progress. This gave us photographers a better chance to wander. Then on to Stratford for the night. The absence of modern is a tremendous relief in these towns. Each town seems to retain its own identity with architecture and the use of their own materials. Even the gardens had a varied character. In leaving Stratford on Avon we visited Ann Hathaway's cottage, too early in the morning to go inside but the garden around it was a tropical Pinkerton Garden with every kind of flower planted helter-skelter in a very casual manner. Ann did not do too badly for herself. The high spot of this day was Lichfield, the birthplace of Ben Johnson and David Garrick, English actor and playwright. The city's unique Cathedral dating back to 1135 with its very ornate exterior of dark red stone, solid with figures of saints and gargoyles, seemed much older than many older churches we had visited. We had lunch at Chester, a very well preserved walled city, said to be the most medieval looking town in England. In the residential part of the town were quaint timber-row houses with flowers growing on every conceivable ledge or crevice. Because of the tremendous crowds of tourists here it was difficult to move about so we moved on.

As we approached the Lake region we came into a patchwork quilt type of landscape of vivid greens, yellows and browns, separated into irregular shapes by stone fences. This was dotted with odd twisted oaks, herds of Holstein, Ayrshire and Jersey cattle, with now and then a boat sailing over a field (in a canal which could not be seen). We were told that one can travel all over England through these canals. The landscape became more hilly as we neared our stop for the night - Windermere - a dream like town much like Cortina, Italy. Next morning before leaving Windemere we crossed the lake by boat, a nice diversion amid broods of ducklings, swans and other bird life. Back on the bus through Ambleside, Rydal, Grasmere, Derwentwater to Kewich for lunch. It was a pleasant stop at the North British Hotel which had a very sumptuous garden for the pleasure of its guests. It is unbelievable to think that a hotel could maintain such an extravagant park and garden.

Our first Scotch town was Gretna Green and a disappointment. Its fame seemed to be a place for eloping couples to get married. But the countryside here became more rustic with wild flowers appearing in profusion. There were great patches of Fireweed, heather on the hill-sides and bluebells and Flanders poppies. At seven o'clock that evening we arrived in the rain to Edinburgh. This two day bus trip is really a delight and the Scottish Bus Company is to be commended on the courteous and comfortable way they manage the tour.

The city tour of Edinburgh took us to the Castle which overlooks the entire city and is interesting mostly for the wonderful view and as a historical museum. Then to the Palace of the Holyrood where Mary Queen of Scots held forth and then on to St. Giles Cathedral. On this tour, a really great guide, Bobby Langer, extremely learned and wise with his material and his handling of people. He had a great wealth of material to select from and always a witty story on the tip of his tongue. In the Palace we heard many stories about Mary, saw her beautifully furnished rooms but with some of the worst paintings imaginable by a Dutch painter. Later we saw some excellent Scotch artists at the National Gallery who could have done better for her. We traced through the various halls and stairways some of the intrigue that lead to a murder known to history. St. Giles Cathedral is a jewel of Gothic arches and dramatic with many old decaying battle flags hanging from its walls. They speak eloquently of Scotland's strenuous history. There were many interesting Chapels especially the "Thistle Chapel" with its carved wood history, rich in symbols and meaning. The order of the Thistle is the most ancient order of chivalry in Scotland.

Our second day we went early to the Royal Botanical Gardens, the absolute top of our English tour. Mary Clarke had told us not to miss it - naturally if there was a botanical garden I would be there. There is nothing to compare with the velutinous lawns here and the wonderful giant trees from every corner of the world. I think my favorite would be the beeches, deep dark green and bronze. Why do we not have them here instead of so many elms? There are many strange tortured conifers that add irregular design and color variety to the profile

of the gardens.

The conservatory displayed the more unusual tropical flowers such as the acacia, orchids, passion flowers, glory flowers, ginger lilies, aphelandra, plumbago and giant water lilies with leaf pads large enough to support a human being. When I came to the Rock Gardens I was overcome because they are so much more complete than those at Kew Gardens in London. In Montana we have Gentians and they have always been my favorite flower, being blue helps. For those who know Gentians here they are all sizes and shades of blue and white. The better known Acaulis, the Farreri and the tiny starry white flowers of the Serotina. Naturally there is an infinite variety of other flowers, the Dianthus, Penstemon, Phlox, Colchicum, Campanula, Gypsophila, Thalictrum, Lilies of all kinds, bronze sedums and golden Hypericum with its fuzzy whiskers. The charming English daisies are everywhere. Just as we were about to leave the gardens I spied a glorious blooming tree pictured so often in Irish Gardens (*Encryphia Cordifolia*). It has great clusters of enormous white blossoms like and oversized Rhododendron. Leaving the garden I could only think what a joy it would be to see it at every season of the year.

After a late lunch we went to the National Gallery, a small museum but with many treasures. There Rembrandts, Murillos, Tiepolo, Valesquez, Daubigny up to the moderns. Walking back up Princess Street to the Hotel we passed many groups of religious oddities, all very young, preaching and screaming their wares. There was a great deal of arguing and squabbling back and forth almost to the point of fighting. There is nothing like youth when it takes up religion. Passing the graceful Robert Burns Memorial I took my last Edinburgh picture at about sundown.

Upon waking we saw dense fog outside our window but went to the airport anyway. After a half hour or so we were bussed to Glasgow to board a plane for Manchester; a long wait and another plane to London - where we had another wait before boarding the plane for Paris. We left Edinburgh at 8:45 and arrived in Paris at 6:15 that evening, dead tired and found the city sweltering hot with temperatures in the 90's.

I never was a devoted Francophile and this trip did not do much to increase my love for the country. I am more apt to remember what I did not see than what I saw. In defense of France I must admit the weather was atrocious intensely hot and arid, the chestnut trees were browning and their dusty gravel parks were no substitute for the velvety green lawns of England and Scotland.

In traveling to Catholic countries during August one must remember not to be there on the 15th of August or any week end for that matter. Everything closes. Because of our delayed arrival we missed the only day we could have visited the Louvre, my soul reason for going there. Admittedly Paris has a beautiful exterior and we saw the outside of everything there on foot. The Notre Dame Cathedral with its gorgeous Rose window; St. Germain des Pres dating back to 1020; the Luxembourg Gardens, dry and no prettier than our own Lincoln Park Gardens; Montmartre with its many sex shops, so near to the beautiful Sacre Coeur. Spectacularly placed on top of a hill with its strange Byzantine domes reminded me of the Mosques in Istanbul; the Opera with the famous Carpeau statue "Terpsichore" a walk up and down the Champs Elysses and a look at the Eifel tower - too many people to venture up it. We could not have seen a thing anyway because of the extremely dense pollution visibility was almost nil.

The bus trip from Paris to Nice, by way of Lyon, was nothing special. We two were the only passengers on this large bus, with its driver and English speaking guide plus air conditioning. The tourist business in France was at an all time low. The reason could be the ridiculous high prices there or the unhospitality of the French people in the past. Nice was unbearably hot and humid and insufferable to be out in - so we spent most of our day in our non-airconditioned room, ornately decorated with striped silk walls (matching mattress and pillow slips), a pleated ceiling and red plush carpeting and furniture. The Hotel Nigresco, however is a charming old fashioned super-excellent food.

The balance of our vacation (9 days) was spent in Portugal between Estoril, Cascais and Lisbon. There is little more that I can say about the friendly cour-

teous and gentle people of Portugal than I have already written. The sparkling blue skies, the glittering white buildings with splashes of color furnished by the bougainvillea, Hibiscus, Geraniums and the giant morning glories. This was our third visit to Portugal and it is my firm opinion that every vacation should end here. Why not an entire vacation here possibly to enjoy the blue skies and sunshine of other Portuguese cities, say Evora, Porto, Nazare, Sagrea and Lagos?